

The Figure on the Road by TheMikeWheelers (jasongracefully)

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Summary:

AU where Will wasn't taken by the Demogorgon, and he was the person who found Eleven.

The Figure on the Road

Author's Note:

I wrote this for The Writer's Guild AU Day, check out the masterpost of everyone's amazing fics here

<http://ghost-grantaire.tumblr.com/post/161113534977/twg-au-masterlist>

On the night of November 6th, 1983, Will Byers biked home from Mike's house to find both his mother and brother were still at work. He had already eaten dinner at the Wheeler's and it was getting late for a school night, so Will peacefully went off to sleep.

The next day was fairly normal. Jonathan had forgotten to wake him up, so he didn't have time to study for the pop quiz he *knew* Gursky was going to give him. So he met Dustin outside his house, and together they biked over to the end of the cul-de-sac Lucas and Mike lived in.

They arrived at school just in time for Troy and James to find them, but that memory quickly blew away when at the end of their first period science class, Mr. Clarke had told the boys that the new Heathkit Ham Shack for the AV Club had arrived. They spent all of lunch that day in the AV room, desperately hoping for someone from Australia to answer their calls, but to no avail.

They picked up some other AV Club from another school, and even a radio all the way in New York, but besides that and the concerning amount of static coming through, no one else answered. They would have to wait for another day to contact Australia.

After school ended, they headed over to Mike's house to finish the campaign from the day before, and though Mike *swore* to his mother it would only last another twenty minutes, the boys were still there for several hours before the game ended. Despite Will's fireball not working against the Demogorgon, Dustin was able to bring up some good defense that saved them all, and together they were able to defeat the monster.

All in all, it was a fairly ordinary day for Will. He didn't have the slightest reason to suspect anything extraordinary to come from his bike ride home, why would he?

Will had lived in Hawkins his entire life, and the boys were his best friends since kindergarten. He'd made that bike ride home from Mike's house down Mirkwood thousands of times throughout his lifetime, and every day it was the same old boring road. It was right next to the woods, so occasionally you could see a deer off on the side, but even that was rare. When they were in fourth grade and met Dustin, who exposed them to *The Hobbit*, Will had decided to start calling that road Mirkwood, because maybe giving a fantasy name to the uneventful street could at least make it *feel* a bit more special.

Will stared down at the road, watching as it flew passed him when he peddled faster and faster. He looked up for just a moment to see where he was, but instead Will almost fell off his bike at the sight.

It was too dark for him to see exactly what it was, but there was a distinct shadow moving in the distance ahead of him. Will's eyes widened and he felt himself lose control of his bike. Mirkwood was a fairly desolate road on the outskirts of Hawkins, it was unusual to ever see anyone else there, and right then Will was still shaken up from the terrifying campaign he had played with his friends. What if it was a monster coming for him, or some other horror that would lead to his death right there on the side of the woods?

His bike started to shake and he tumbled onto the ground on the side of the road. Adrenaline pumped through Will, and he pushed his paranoia aside to see what was there. But when he saw what it was, his eyebrows raised in confusion.

It wasn't a monster, or any other horror come to kill him. Instead stood a girl, at least Will thought she was a girl, standing in the middle of the street, watching him.

Her hair was buzzed down to her scalp, wearing nothing but an oversized yellow tee-shirt, covered in dirt, and what Will had to believe was blood.

He swallowed a gulp and stood up, going to walk towards the girl.

She must have been lost, Will concluded, and no matter how mysterious she looked, he wanted to help.

“Hi, I'm Will. Are you okay? Do you know where you're going?”

The girl didn't answer, just staring back at Will.

“Are you lost? Do you need me to help you find your parents or someone?”

Again, no response. Will was gaining more goosebumps by the minute, but he continued, letting out a large sigh.

“Well, uh, there's supposed to be a really big storm tonight. The rain is gonna start any minute now, and if you don't know where you're going, you can come home with me. At least until you know where you're supposed to go.”

Cautiously, the girl nodded her head, surprising Will. His heart was still beating too fast for him to concentrate, and he didn't even want to think about what his mother or Jonathan would say when he brought home a complete stranger, but this girl was obviously lost or in trouble or something, he couldn't just leave her alone out in the rain.

He signaled for her to get onto the back of his bike, and then quickly peddled home, arriving at the front door right as the rain began to fall from the sky.

Ushering the girl inside, Will was delighted to find out Jonathan and his mom were both working late again that night. He ran over to his supercom, left underneath his bed, yelling for the boys to meet him at his house ASAP.

Mike, Lucas, and Dustin didn't exactly want to bike all the way over to Will's house in the pouring rain, but he continued to insist it was an emergency, and he needed them immediately. Mike agreed with a sigh, then Dustin and Lucas followed in his lead.

The word “emergency” created many vivid thoughts in the boys' minds. Their imaginations spun, picturing everything from Will getting hurt on his ride home, to needing help cleaning up a dead

body. What they did not imagine, however, was that there would be a fifth person joining them at Will's house.

"Um, who is this?" Lucas started, raising his eyebrows at the girl sitting on the couch.

Will shrugged, "I don't know. I found her lost on Mirkwood."

"So you decided to bring the stranger into your house?!"

"What was I supposed to do?!"

"Stop yelling!" Mike intervened, "She's obviously scared and your arguing isn't going to help that!"

Dustin spoke up next, "Will, this was a bad idea. When is your mom coming home, because I don't think she's gonna want to see some weird girl sitting on her couch."

"Do we even know she's a girl?"

"Shut up, Lucas!" Mike snapped at him.

"I'm just saying!"

Thunder rolled through the house, momentarily stopping the boys from their bickering.

After a few seconds of silence, Will spoke up once more, "So what are we going to do with her?"

"What do you mean 'what are we going to do'?!" Dustin retorted, "We don't know her, why is she suddenly our problem?"

"Because she's obviously lost and alone and someone needs to help her!"

"Just tell your mom about her when she gets home," Lucas insisted.

Will rolled his eyes, "My mom is stressed enough as it is, I don't want to put something else on her too!"

"What are you going to do then?! Look at her, she won't even talk. I

bet she's psycho, she probably escaped from Penthurst or somewhere!"

"She's not from some mental hospital!"

"How do you know?"

"Because she-"

"Guys!" Mike yelled, interrupting the other three boys from their arguing, "I have a plan. She can come home with me tonight, and sleep in the basement. No one in my family is ever down there anyway. She can sleep there tonight and tomorrow we'll decide what to do next."

"Are you serious, Mike? You're really gonna let this weird girl sleep in your house? Without your parents knowing?" Dustin lectured.

Lucas was the next to complain, "For all you know she could be some kind of murderer!"

"She's just scared and lost and she needs our help!" Mike yelled out, and the other boys realized there was no way to sway his decision at this point. Mike was stubborn, and he had decided to take in this strange girl.

He sat down next to the girl, carefully putting his jacket around her, "My name's Mike, and you can come stay at my house tonight. Is that okay?"

The girl nodded, then surprised the boys by letting out a small, "Yes."

Mike grinned and looked over to the boys with a sense of victory in his eyes. The girl could talk, after all, she wasn't as crazy as Dustin and Lucas were acting she was.

Lucas rolled his eyes, and Dustin groaned, but Will smiled encouragingly, letting Mike know that *someone* thought this was a good decision at least.

And with that, Mike led the girl outside, where she got onto the back of his bike and headed towards his house.

Mike had no idea what he was getting himself into that night. He had no idea that bringing home that girl-- Eleven, he would learn is her name-- would lead to so much. He never dreamed that with her, him and his three best friends would go on to fight a monster, and a whole bunch of government workers from that spooky lab near Will's house. In his wildest fantasies he never believed that the girl's supposedly single night stay in his basement would end up only being the first night of many, and that after that night, she would never really leave his life.

When Will found that strange girl in the middle of the road that night in 1983, Mike had no idea that when he brought her home, he was bringing home the love of his life.